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THE
VOICE
OF THE
WORKER

'That which is good for the working class I esteem patriotic ...' James Connolly

SHANNON SELL-OUT

SHANNON INTERNATIONAL AIRPORT has been sold out. After all the eloquent words, spirited speeches and ambiguous promises, the Irish Government has bowed to the Mighty Dollar; has acceded to the demand of the 'friendly' USA for Dublin Airport landing rights. These rights have been granted to at least one American carrier, Pan Am, which will now be in direct competition with Aer Lingus for the Dublin bound tourist traffic.

So confident is Pan Am that the company has acquired a major stake in the Cahill Car Rental firm's Dublin Airport operation. The reason behind this open move, which has come at an embarrassing time for the Irish Government, is to ferry American passengers who fly into Dublin with Pan Am, to their city centre hotels. Captain Joe Cahill, head of the car firm, speaking on the Pan Am deal, made no secret of the fact that he intends to 'package' holidays using Pan Am cars. 'There are thousands of Americans waiting to come here,' he said. ('Irish Independent', June 1, 1972).

The following crucial quote from the Pan Am press release contains a clue on the landing rights issue: 'With the addition of Cahill's fleet, Pan Am's World Rent-a-Car will now have 27,000 cars for hire in 650 European centres, including 'every Western European city served by Pan Am.'

The decision to grant Dublin landing rights to one American carrier was taken by the Irish Government before the EEC Referendum. It has been constantly denied, lest this decision would have a detrimental effect on the outcome of the Referendum. With time running out for Aer Lingus (in August the New York ban against the airline comes into force), the Irish Government knew it was impossible to insist on retaining the status quo. It has been estimated that Aer Lingus would lose £12,745,000 in annual revenue if forced out of New York, so therefore the Irish Government was left with no option but to accede to the landing rights 'request' of the US. The weakness of the Government's negotiating position was highlighted by the fact that Aer Lingus would have lost over 70% of its trans-Atlantic traffic and faced overnight financial disaster if the US ban had been enforced.

As it is, Aer Lingus will lose at least £250,000 by allowing the Americans in, that is in addition to the 'serious loss it had last year. It is also likely that

there will be further losses, because the Americans are seeking further rights which would allow them to lift traffic out of Dublin for European destinations.



But the real loser is Shannon Airport and the tourist trade which is based on it. At present, two-thirds of the trans-Atlantic traffic to Ireland gets off at Shannon and most of this filters off to the West of Ireland. Though the Americans are promising that all their flights will touch down at Shannon, the whole marketing behind the Pan Am effort is the 'European package' type—Americans who want to get to as many capital cities in Europe as quickly as possible.

Over two months ago, the Minister for Transport and Power, Brian Lenihan, clearly indicated that the Government would grant landing rights at Dublin to Pan Am provided it landed its planes in both directions at Shannon. The chairman of the Shannon Region Action Committee, Michael O'Gorman, attacked Lenihan for this statement and stated that he (Lenihan) 'had given far too many promises which he had failed to live up to ... It is only four months ago since Mr. Lenihan accused the National Tourist Council of 'national treachery' because

continued overleaf

death of a paper

THE MORTALITY RATE among Irish newspapers is increasing. The latest casualty, the short-lived local weekly, 'Vigilans', died without a whimper. The paper was edited and published by Tom Tobin, former editor of the 'Limerick Weekly Echo' and the 'Limerick Leader'. The first edition came out on April 15, and a month later the paper failed to answer the bell for the fifth edition.

'A newspaper for office boys written by office boys' was how Lord Robert Cecil described the 'Daily Mail' when it first appeared. In publicity handouts Tobin did not mention office boys—but included just about everyone else as potential readers and supporters of his paper. He claimed: '..."Vigilans" will be published with the sole aim of protecting and furthering the rights of Residents' and Tenants' Associations and other associated groups such as Youth Clubs and, indeed, any local body that is there for the benefit of the community we live in. '...This is my own newspaper ...I will not be influenced by any authority, local or otherwise. You will get the facts as you supply them and as

I find them. They will not be hidden as may be the case in other papers.'

It was further emphasised that the paper was 'the only publication in the whole of Ireland catering for the residents' and tenants' associations ... 'The paper was, of course, doomed from the start. Tobin, despite his long experience as a reporter and photographer and his skill as a feature-writer, had too many powerful forces operating against him. As well as editing the paper, he struggled to attract advertising. Here he found himself hustling against the professional and full-time efforts of the 'Leader' and 'Echo' ad-men. His task in claiming that the 'facts ... will not be hidden', while at the same time trying to be 'nice' to the business advertisers, was impossible. Tobin tried all he knew to get the paper off the ground and to win readers but could not get hold of the necessary capital and advertising revenue.

His attempt points out the difficulty an unemployed reporter faces in trying to obtain employment in Limerick. The freedom of a working reporter in the city

continued overleaf

SHANNON SELL-OUT

continued from front page

it issued a statement to the effect that one American airline should be allowed into Dublin.'

Lenihan's shifting attitudes highlight the political fears of Fianna Fail in dealing with the problem. Shannon has long been Fianna Fail's political showpiece and much of its support in the Clare and Limerick areas is generated by the employment and fall-out benefits provided by the airport and the industrial estate. Many of the party's hacks and key supporters have been given 'plum' jobs at Shannon. So the dilemma of Fianna Fail, caught between its 'total commitment' to Shannon and its helplessness in dealing with the American ultimatum, becomes clear. So great was the pressure from the Shannon Action Committee that the Taoiseach, Jack Lynch, took time out, during the closing stages of the Fianna Fail Ardfeis in February, to state that no decision had yet been taken and that the Government was determined to get the best possible bargain in the negotiations.

In America, Shannon's case was a non-starter. Politicians, labour leaders, even the 'St. Patrick's Day ('Paper-Hat') Irishmen' showed little interest and carried no political weight. The response showed that there is no American basis of support for maintaining the status quo.

The Government, when it finally announces the sell-out will, of course, give various face-saving reasons, including the general decline in tourist earnings, to support its case. There is always that new chestnut, the EEC Regional Development Policy, to come to the rescue. In an EEC context, it will be pointed out, capital will be made available to aid underdeveloped rural regions, such as the dying West. What is more, the Irish Government will 'insist'

death of a paper

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corresponds exactly with the freedom the paper's publisher will allow him. He can't go over to the opposition (what there is of it) because employment openings are rarely available. Under these conditions, it is not surprising that most reporters do not rock the boat, even over important matters of principle.

And so the once powerful figure in the Limerick press world, Tom Tobin, is now 'resting'. Having courageously fought his way back from a very serious illness to partial health, he now finds it difficult to get a job. Having helped countless politicians, pop-stars and business whizz-kids to wealth and power, his favours are now no longer in demand. Some of his press colleagues are now serving the system in the same old way in Tobin's old seats of power. But isn't that capitalism running true to form.

on Pan Am stopping off at Shannon on the way to and from Dublin. This, Brian Lenihan will point out, will ensure the future of Shannon. We will be told that internal airline traffic will grow because the extra 600,000 Americans that Pan Am will bring to Dublin will want to see Ireland's beauty spots. Therefore Aer Lingus flights, from Dublin to Shannon, serving the West and South, will increase and open a new era of prosperity for these regions.

So when the Shannon deal is finally announced it will not appear so bad ... and the Irish people will accept it as inevitable, while still counting their blessings in having the great and mighty US as a 'friend'.

direct rule

THE HEATH INITIATIVES have caused a certain amount of confusion in the working class in Northern Ireland. Protestant workers feel that the suspension of Stormont is the first step towards incorporation into the South, while Catholic workers believe that their major source of grievance has been removed. It is vital to spell out exactly what these new developments amount to.

Examined carefully, the new arrangement does not constitute a concession to the IRA or to the anti-Partitionist strategy of 'national liberation' through the civil rights movement. The object of that campaign has been to further the policy of bringing the Ulster Protestant nation under the control of the Southern ruling class. But that objective is no nearer to realisation as a consequence of the new arrangement—the right of the majority in Northern Ireland to remain in the United Kingdom state has not been weakened by direct rule. Rather, it has been strengthened. The 1949 Government of Ireland Act still applies, and the periodic plebiscites must ensure the present status of Northern Ireland for as long as the majority wishes it.

But, it is said, what if the British Labour Party was returned to power at Westminster? It is sufficient to point out that the reality of Government has an amazingly sobering effect on opposition leaders. The reality of Northern Ireland, as far as any move to force the Protestant population into the South is concerned, is shown by the two-day strike by Vanguard, which paralyzed the country.

While direct rule does not essentially affect the position of the Protestant community in regard to Britain, it must have a powerful effect on the position of the Catholic minority. Catholic nationalists have used and exploited the campaign for reform within Northern Ireland as a cover for achieving their real ambition, the ending of the Border

Yet, despite the gloss which will be sprayed over the Pan Am landing rights 'agreement', it will fail to disguise the cold fact that the Shannon workers and the West in general have been sold out by 'Republican' Fianna in the interests of US airline profits.

Before the formal announcement is made the ritual of more talks between the Irish and US Governments will be carried out. Aer Lingus will be allowed to serve one other airport, Philadelphia, as a sop to the Irish lobby. It will also obtain the right to pick up passengers at both Boston and Chicago and serve New York en route. Shannon's claim to remain the country's only trans-Atlantic airport is as dead as cold mutton.

and the inclusion of the North into an all-Ireland state. They have argued that Stormont is the root of all evil. With Stormont suspended the duplicity of the anti-Partitionist position is revealed. They can no longer maintain that it is any lack of democracy in the North which is responsible for the bombing and shooting campaign. They have to come straight out and say to the Catholic minority: We want an end to the Union—will you back us?

The confusion of the reform issue with the Border issue has led to the intensification of the nationalist conflict between the two communities in Northern Ireland. The working class interest has suffered accordingly. If direct rule succeeds in separating the issue of reform from the issue of the Border, then it will undoubtedly help to reduce the nationalist conflict. And the working class interest requires precisely that.

Examined carefully, then, the new arrangement is superior to the old. But in the confused atmosphere now existing, a clarification of the wishes of the majority in Northern Ireland would be of great benefit. The outcome is not in doubt. But a plebiscite now would certainly exercise a sobering effect on those politicians, nationalist and otherwise, who wish to read into direct rule more than it actually contains. The Workers' Association therefore demands that an immediate plebiscite be held. (Issued by the Workers' Association).

connolly's socialism

Ireland as distinct from her people, is nothing to me; and the man who is bubbling over with love and enthusiasm for Ireland, and can yet pass unmoved through our streets and witness all the wrong and the suffering, the shame and the degradation brought upon the people of Ireland—aye, brought by Irishmen upon Irishmen and women, without burning to end it, is in my opinion, a fraud and a liar in his heart, no matter how he loves that combination of chemical elements he is pleased to call 'Ireland'.

MODERN CAPITALISM is creating all sorts of problems; it is also throwing up some rare 'solutions' to cure its increasing ills. According to a 'Limerick Chronicle' report, May 30, Fr. Patrick Bowen, C.C., recently claimed that he had 'the one and only solution to the ills of society today'. His magic cure-all? 'Real proper family life'. Having made his diagnosis of the condition of the capitalist society, Fr. Bowen addressed his plea and his 'solution' to 'all parents'.

He said 'that mothers who go to work so as to afford luxuries and the price of entertainment and drink were blatantly reneging on their children and denying them the love and training they so badly need. Anyway, carpets and wallpaper never yet made a home. It's people that make a home and the home is nice and happy if the family are happy and content together'.

He concluded 'lastly I must tell you that I just cannot understand why so many of you allow your children to roam the streets so late at night. There is no fulfilment, no happiness to be found on the streets. I add that there is nothing good to be learned on the streets, especially at night. If you love your child, if you care for him, you will not allow him out on the streets at night; he has no business out there.'

Nowhere in his talk did Fr. Bowen show any awareness of the economic facts of life. He did not explain how 'proper family life' can be achieved on low wages, unemployment benefit, widows' pension and in over-crowded living conditions. Despite his disclaimer that 'carpets and wallpaper never made a home' he failed

BOWEN-SETTER CURE

to explain how some of the biggest, best and expensively furnished houses in Limerick are owned by priests. Many of Fr. Bowen's parishioners will surely ask why it takes three separate houses to house the three priests in their parish. There is certainly something radically wrong with society when single men live in spacious houses and magnificently appointed palaces while countless large families live in two-bedroomed houses and many more married couples with young families are forced to live with their parents and in-laws in grossly over-crowded conditions.

Another significant omission from Fr. Bowen's remarks was the part played by bingo in taking mothers and fathers from their homes at night and leaving children on the streets. No mention was made of the role of priests in organising and running bingo and in relieving men and women of their money. But, then, this form of entertainment is a sensitive area for Fr. Bowen as bingo in Limerick is almost totally controlled by the clergy and the Catholic church.

release of the internees, supposedly on general democratic grounds. But at the same time democracy was being impinged upon in another way. Lives and jobs were being destroyed by the Republican offensive. It was obvious to the meanest intelligence that there was an intimate connection between internment and the terrorist offensive which preceded it. But the CRA insisted on dealing with internment as if it was an isolated issue. This was certainly not due to a failure to understand its connection with the terrorist campaign.

If it had been genuinely concerned with civil rights it would also have demonstrated against the Republican campaign of violence, and demanded its cessation. But apart from a few mild 'for-the-record' statements issued under pressure the CRA did nothing towards achieving civil rights as regards to Republican terrorism.

A majority of the demands originally made by the CRA have long been conceded legislatively. Only the abolition of the Special Powers Act remains. The CRA, again, treats the abolition of the Special Powers Act as an isolated issue, but the position held by the Workers' Association is the democratic position. We believe that the abolition of the Special Powers Act and internment can only be achieved in conjunction with the ending of the Republican terrorist campaign.

With regard to the CRA claim that civil rights have been legislated but not implemented, it is obvious that legislation has made a significant contribution, and that any further progress can only come about through a period of social evolution.

Division and discrimination in Northern Ireland is a consequence of the war between the two nationalities, and has also had a feedback effect on the national conflict. It is not just a one-sided responsibility on the part of the Unionist Government. Separation in education, for example, is due almost entirely to the campaign waged against mixed education by the Catholic Church, the Nationalists and Sinn Fein. Under-representation of Catholics in the police force is partly due to the fact that the Catholic minority was induced by anti-Partitionist politics to boycott the Stormont administration in order to disrupt it. In other areas discrimination often arises from social differences resulting from the earlier industrial development of the Protestant Nation, thus the majority of trade workers have historically been of Protestant stock. Increasingly, with Industrial Training schemes and the arrival of new industry, this type of so-called discrimination is diminishing. In local government, discrimination, which has been practiced by both Unionists and Nationalists in their own areas, is in the process of being remedied by adequate legislation.

Further progress can be made only on the basis of recognising that the Catholic and Protestant communities in Ireland are two quite distinct historical national communities, and that both must be accorded the right to self-determination. (Issued by the Workers' Association).

civil rights?

THE CIVIL RIGHTS ASSOCIATION formally claims that its objectives are simply to establish equal rights for Catholics and Protestants in Northern Ireland, but its practice has rarely been consistent with this objective.

The CRA has always held an ambiguous position on the question of the right of Northern Ireland to remain in the United Kingdom while the majority so desire. They have abstracted from the Northern Ireland situation certain grievances from which the Catholic community suffered i.e. housing, and have insisted on agitating about these grievances. To listen to their spokesmen one would imagine that the right of the majority to remain within the UK was not a topical issue. Little that they have said indicates that, for almost two years, an extensive terrorist campaign has been waged by Republican forces, with the support and encouragement of the Southern ruling class, for the purpose of extending Catholic Nationalist rule over the North.

They may argue that this question is outside their terms of reference. But it cannot be accepted that this matter is outside the terms of reference of any political organisation in Ireland today.

Only a group of ivory-tower academics could genuinely be unconcerned about it. A group which has specialised in confrontational politics since 1968 is certainly not unconcerned about it, and its ambiguous position is not due to lack of concern, but to strategy.

The CRA went about its campaign for civil rights for Catholics in a way that antagonised the Protestant community. The main part of the Protestant hostility to the CRA was not due to opposition to equal rights for Catholics, but to a conviction that the CRA was more interested in pursuing anti-Partitionist objectives than in bringing about reforms within Stormont. While the Workers' Association believes in democratic rights for Catholics, the CRA behaviour since the beginning of the terrorist campaign shows how well founded the Protestants' convictions were. The matters on which it chose to remain silent, and the matters on which it chose to speak and agitate; and the way in which its activities dovetailed with Republican activity, put beyond all doubt that it is primarily a Catholic nationalist organisation, and not a civil rights movement.

After internment, it campaigned for the

poems

from

THE BARD'S PROTEST

MICHAEL HOGAN

In these rigid and icy Christian days,
I wish that I ne'er had been,
To know the sorrow my heart has known,
For the mockery my eyes have seen.
Has your 'Civilisation' sown one seed
Of love in your bosom's ice?
Has your 'march of progress' crush'd
one weed
In the desert of human vice?

I have seen the sluggard and dullard fed
By the sweat of the starving poor;
I have seen from kindly hand, the bread
Snatched away by the churlish boor.
I have seen the honest man cast aside
In the shadow of stern neglect,
While the villian, who Nature and God
belied,
Was greeted with marked respect.

I have seen the noble sons of worth
To the hell of felons consigned,
While reptiles, whose crimes disgraces
the earth,
Walk'd free as the summer wind.
I have seen the swaggering upstart turn
His fiend's sneer at merit's claim;
And the devil--soul'd profligate spat,
with scorn,
On the virtue he brought to shame.

I saw the Apostle of Holy Writ
To the godless wronger lean,
And at the banquet of Dives sit,
While poor Lazarus begg'd in vain.
I saw a covetous steward of God,
His wealth with a steel-grip hold,
While famine stalk'd thro' the land,
plague-shod
And the poor lambs starved in the fold.

I saw Christ's vineyard overrun
By the huxters in saintly shapes,
Who thro' the top of the roof stole down,
To rob and to eat the grapes.
I have heard a shepherd, in holy clothes,
Preach eternity not too long,
Nor hell too hot, to punish all those
Who dare rise against tyrant wrong.

I saw the greedy monopolist haste
To devour the small fry of trade;
I saw the scheming bankrupt feast
On the wealth that industry made,
And the law for the rich thief could
forget
The thousands he squandered away,
While the struggler was whipp'd for a
paltry debt,
Which his poverty could not pay.

CAPITALIST CURE?

'O, for a draught of vintage ...
That I might drink and leave
the world unseen,
And with thee fade away into
the forest dim.'

a sign of the

A SURVEY published in the March issue of 'Social Studies' disclosed a drop of 45% in the recruitment of priests, brothers and nuns. The report showed that the number of vocations to the religious life increased rapidly in the 1930s and 40s, levelled off in the late fifties and early 'sixties and declined in the 1965-70 period. The reduction in the number of priests is the first recorded in Ireland in the past 100 years. The combined total of drop-outs from seminaries in the same 6-year period was 50.9%.

The survey gives the number of priests who have been laicised as 15 ('65-'70) but it does not include a similar number of priests on temporary leave of absence and those who left without going through the orthodox laicisation process. (This process, by which a priest is 'reduced to lay status', is considered by many priests to be humiliating and some simply refuse to undergo it.)

It is clear from this situation that Ireland is not immune from the international trend of falling vocations and the increasing defection of priests. According to a survey published in the Rome newspaper 'Avvenire', in August last year, more than 2,000 priests are abandoning their ministries annually. Commenting on the Irish position in the 'Irish Times', on April 13, Fr. Liam Ryan, editor of 'Social Studies', put the matter plainly when he said: 'The general picture with vocations is that they have declined, I suppose you could say considerably.'

In an editorial in the March issue of 'Social Studies' Fr. Ryan wrote: '1. The real question is not why vocations are in decline but why they were ever so high. Why did the number of vocations increase so dramatically in the first half of the twentieth century? 2. The problem is not why do young people no longer opt for the religious life in such large numbers but rather why does the religious life no longer attract them. In sociological language, we should regard young people as the constant rather than as the variable.'

Further in the editorial Fr. Ryan attempted to answer his first question of 'why did the number of vocations increase so dramatically in the first half of the twentieth century?' 'The phenomenal rise in vocations in Ireland in the period 1920-1960 is ... due to a convergence of many factors. Any explanation however, must take account of the total context of Irish life from the middle of the nineteenth century. Ireland had all but collapsed as a nation ... It lost its Government (Act of Union), its language, its people (famine), it saw the collapse of one National movement after another (O'Connell's repeal movement, Young Irelanders, the Fenians, Home Rule, Parnell, etc.), it saw the decline and

disappearance of much of its industry and the mood became one of despair and disillusionment. People rightly felt that the good life was not to be found in Ireland and they 'opted out of life' in various ways. The most obvious form was emigration—physically going away. But there were other forms. Late marriage and no marriage is also a form of opting out—a refusal to get involved in life at that level—and for the first time in our history over a quarter of our people did not marry at all. There were lots of other symptoms, for instance our mass banning of contemporary novels, our addiction to alcohol, even our excessive nationalism, with its emphasis on the fact that our present life is no good and so we must restore a sort of mystical past before Ireland will once again be a light to the world and a glory to God ... 'This process of alienation from present life began in Ireland in the nineteenth century and lasted well into the twentieth. Religion and nationalism were the only items to survive it, religion because it promised the hope of another life elsewhere, nationalism because it promised a better life here and now. Both in fact thrived on the nineteenth century collapse, but neither was sufficient to halt the process of frustration and alienation. And so Irish nationalism and Irish Catholicism became the two great sources of ideals for Irishmen, inspiring them to live for God and to die for Ireland. After the events of 1916 and the attainment of freedom in 1922, nationalism seemed to lose its vitality. In the 1930s and 1940s, Ireland as a nation became a close introspective society out of the mainstream of modern life and modern politics. During that period, the Church was the only institution in Ireland offering an ideal. The Church was looking out at the world and calling on young men and women to do something about the paganism and the poverty in which most of humanity lived. Nowadays, the wheel has come almost full circle. Now it is the nation that is looking out at the world and preparing to take her place among the nations of Europe, while the Church has become introspective and unsure. The sheer idealism which once inspired young men to go and convert China no longer has the same vitality. Indeed, here too the wheel may be already in the process of doing a full turn.'

In his analysis Fr. Ryan ignores the country's economic development and thereby misses the key to a full understanding of the situation. James Connolly made it clear at the end of the last century that Irish capitalism could not hope to grow up independent of imperialism. International trade was already dominated by the major capitalist countries when Irish industry began to develop. The economy was in the grip of Britain and it was impossible for it to break free. The Southern Irish home

times

market was too small and underdeveloped to give the emerging native industrialists a base to capture foreign markets from the major capitalist countries.

The effort to build an independent capitalist state behind tariff walls and import duties was, therefore, doomed from the start. However, when Fianna Fail came to power in 1932 the attempt was made. The conservative religion, the narrow nationalism, the censorship, etc., were the logical results of the insular protectionist economy, and served the interests of this form of Irish capitalism until it was finally abandoned in the late 1950s.

Southern Ireland remained predominantly an agricultural country in this period, and most vocations to the religious life came traditionally from the middle classes and the small farming families. The social influence and prestige of having a 'priest in the family' was considerable. Writing in his book, 'The Vanishing Irish', (chapter 18, 'The Road Ahead'), Fr. John A. O'Brien stated: 'Another factor tending to deepen and extend the wholesale practice of celibacy in Ireland is the enormous reverence for the priesthood and the religious life which obtains among the Irish. It is without parallel anywhere on earth and produces far more vocations than in any other nation. Nearly every family aspires to have either a priest or a nun among its members, and preferably both. With veneration of the religious life comes unwittingly but inevitably veneration for the celibate state, with which the religious life in the Catholic West is always associated. 'Add to this the fact that priests, brothers, and sisters are most numerous in Ireland and touch the life of the people at almost every turn. They teach in the schools, operate the hospitals and charitable institutions minister in the churches, and are conspicuously present in the life of the individual from the cradle to the grave. Naturally they stress the ideals of the religious life, reflect the viewpoint of the religious concerning the dangers of contact with those of the other sex, and etch upon the consciousness of their pupils their own outlook on life and their own distinctive scale of values, incentives, cautions and taboos. Unconsciously the young grow up with an outlook on life not substantially different from that of their celibate spiritual teachers, guides and councillors. Thus is the ideal of celibacy, inextricably interwoven into the pattern of their emotions, thoughts, dreams, and aspirations so that they tend in this regard to react like monks and nuns wearing lay garb and living in the world instead of in the cloister.' In the land of protection, in the economic, religious and cultural cocoon of Southern Ireland, the priest was king.

(to be continued)

BIRDS OF A FEATHER

THE 'NEW STATESMAN', a weekly 'quality' magazine which regards itself as 'watchdog' of the British Labour Party, recently came out strongly against the Labour Leader, Harold Wilson. The attack took many people by surprise and caused discussion and controversy in political and press circles. It also secured a large amount of publicity for the 'Statesman' whose sales have been falling steadily in recent years. The magazine, which is now edited by the middle class liberal Anthony Howard, did not, naturally enough, attack Wilson and the Labour Governments' record from a working class or socialist angle. It's

criticisms were made from a personal and highly selective basis and will have little effect on Wilson's position as Leader of the Labour Party; they may however have some effect on the 'New Statesman' circulation.

The paper claimed that Wilson has 'sunk to a position where his very presence in Labour's leadership pollutes the atmosphere of politics'.

Eager to show the faith they have in Wilson, many of the other capitalist newspapers rushed to his defence. There was none quicker than the Tory-owned 'Daily Express', whose editorial on May 28 was headed: 'Labour's Best Leader'. The editorial left nobody in any doubt as to what the 'Express' thought of Wilson and it stated: 'For real spitefulness there is nothing to touch the 'comradely' Leftwing Socialists ... The 'Daily Express' has clashed with Mr. Wilson times without number. But the fact remains that he is the best man to lead that uneasy coalition of interests which is the Labour movement. His skill in winning-over the middle of the road voters resulted in six years of power. 'As he has been leader for only nine years he has a far better record in this respect than any of his predecessors.' What caused this die-hard imperialist paper to rally openly and loyally to the side of a 'socialist' leader under fire?

It is obvious that the 'Daily Express' and the big business it represents are happy to have a 'socialist' Labour Party in power under Harold Wilson. Their system and their profits would again be safely guaranteed.

Surely this is proof enough that the British Labour Party serves the interests, not of the working class, but of the ruling class. During Labour's six years of power under Wilson no attempt was made to abolish the 'free' enterprise system. Instead we saw high unemployment, rising prices and even an attempt to introduce anti-trade union legislation which was only postponed after strong opposition from British workers.

It is, of course, nothing new for capitalist newspapers to support and defend parties masquerading as socialist. In 1969, when the Irish Labour Party was making 'leftwing' noises, the 'Irish Times', in an editorial welcomed this as a great development. It's reasons for doing so were very clear and had nothing whatever to do with socialism. The 'Times' argued that if there was not a party like the Labour Party to cater for people with leftwing ideas, there was a danger that they might drift into some other organisations which might not be considered political parties. In other words, if the Labour Party did not accommodate these people they might set about building a genuine working class party.

British and Irish workers must reject the sham socialism of both Labour parties. When the workers have a real party to lead them, then the hired scribblers of the 'New Statesman' and the 'Daily Express' will have no need to engage in their shadow boxing games of bluff.

CHANGE OF ADDRESS

RECENTLY THREE MEN were made homeless in Limerick. Of course, this is nothing exceptional, as there are hundreds of homeless, but the circumstances by which these three men found themselves without a home deserves examination.

The three men were lodging in the Marian House, Mallow Street, which is owned by a Mrs. Power, who also owns another house in the city, which is let out in flats. In the Marian Guest House there are nine rooms and the occupants were told that the rents were being increased.

One man was unemployed and had an income of only £4.50 per week. Out of this he would have to pay the increased rent of £3.25 for his small room. Of course no meals were provided, and it is an impossibility for any man to feed himself on £1.25 for the week. He explained this position to the landlady, Mrs. Power, and her reply was that she was not running a charitable institution. So the three men, on low incomes, were left with no option but to hit the road and fend for themselves as best they could. The rent they were paying was £1.50 and the increase to £3.25 is a jump of over 100%. This assault on the meagre incomes of almost helpless men was waged in the interests of exploitation and profit. It is allowed happen within our present society ... property and profits before people ... it is yet another indictment of the system. Like the vast majority of property owners, Mrs. Power is seeking the maximum possible rent for her house. But who worries about the three men thrown out on the streets?



NO CHANGE HERE

'LIMERICK WAS very class-conscious, strongly divided into various sections of the population. A few rich people kept us apart; they were mostly people in business.'

(Sean Keating, 'Limerick Leader', 26-2-'72).

TONY CROWLEY

ITS MASTER'S VOICE

THE EEC REFERENDUM VOTE was a foregone conclusion. The vast majority of people were in no doubt about the inevitability of entry. The Common Market Defence Committee failed to provide a realistic alternative and its opposition was purely a token paper affair.

The choice workers faced was between small-scale and large-scale capitalism. It was obvious that the latter represented the lesser of two evils. Workers had nothing to gain from turning the clock back to the protective native capitalism of the '30s, 40s and '50s. The bad wages and working conditions, the cultural and political isolation and the small hot-house industry served the purpose of the undeveloped Irish capitalists over the last fifty years.

For the last decade the Southern ruling class has been gingerly but steadily dismantling the old claustrophobic religion and the introverted nationalism in preparing for the EEC entry. This trend will continue in smoothing the way for a common economic and cultural policy throughout Europe to serve the needs of

modern monopoly capitalism.

The Referendum marked a crucial development in Fianna Fail's history. Its policies have come full circle from the independent go-it-alone line it adopted when it came to power in 1932. In 1965 when it signed the Anglo-Irish Free Trade Agreement its economic policy had become completely unionist. The EEC entry is a logical progression in this context. Jack Lynch made this position clear when he addressed the Fianna Fail East Limerick Comhairle Ceanntair annual dinner on April 21. He stated: 'The real choice facing the people in this Referendum is a choice between the changes which will take place on this country becoming a member and those which will take place whether we like it or not, if we stay outside. Many people would seem to be suffering from the illusion for illusion it is, that we are free to stay as we are. There could be no greater myth.'

'When Fianna Fail commenced the drive for industrial development in the 1930s, they gave Irish industries the chance to grow with the aid of tariffs and quotas

against imports.

'That was the right thing to do at that time. That is the way industry can build up its ability to supply the home market. But once the potential on the home market is reached it becomes necessary and inevitable to seek export markets for further expansion.'

'Industry, like any dynamic body, cannot stand still. Irish industry either had to go on changing and expanding or it had to suffer stagnation and decay.'

'Industrial expansion in the 1960s bringing forty thousand extra jobs was based almost entirely on exports. To maintain, and indeed accelerate that expansion in the next decade calls for even more exports.' (Limerick Chronicle' April 25).

Nobody can fail to understand Lynch's explanation of the country's economic history and future development. Protected capitalism had out-lived its usefulness, and in the last decade the country had to be thrown wide open to the exploitation of foreign capital. The leading Irish capitalists realised that a slice of the imperialist market had more to offer than the contracting home market. In preparing and leading the Irish people in this complete about-face, the Fianna Fail government, the Executive Committee of Irish capitalism, is obeying the call of its master's voice.

HAVE THE FIRST SHOTS in the 'quiet revolution' been fired? Leading the attack on behalf of the Limerick working class is the general manager of the 'Limerick Leader', Jim Kelly. Following a pioneering expedition into the lower depths of some of our Corporation housing schemes, he nailed his Cork colours to the revolutionary mast in his weekly 'Spartacus' column and unashamedly declared: 'I'm Backing the Tenants.' Like St. Paul on the road to Damascus, his lightning-bolt experience of the housing conditions of Limerick workers apparently resulted in his traumatic conversion to a tenants' rights champion.

The narrative (May 13) of his epic odyssey is redolent of his new and moving reaction to the horror experienced and of his determination to help bring it to an end: 'The condition of the roadways and the little green patches—one could not call them open spaces or playing areas by any stretch of the imagination—was unbelievable. ... On practically every roadway there were small children playing about, and they ran the grave risk of being knocked down by cars and seriously injured, if not indeed, of being killed. There can be no doubt that the lack of proper playing areas in these large housing estates is nothing short of criminal, and the short-sightedness, or lack of proper planning, that could overlook such a provision is to be deplored. '...In this day and age there would seem to be no justification for condemning some of our citizens to such living conditions. If the Corporation is attempting to screw the last half-penny out of its tenants, then it should be prepared to give decent services in return, and not to expect them to live amid such neglect and near-ruin. Many of the houses

HUMBUG

are well maintained with nice tidy gardens and fresh paintwork, but obviously those, who through ill-health or unemployment, have not the means to maintain their homes, must be helped as much as possible out of public funds. Many Corporation tenants certainly appear to have much to complain about.

So far, the Limerick Tenants' Association has not responded to the support of its well-paid and influential recruit. However, the Association may be expected to ask how Kelly's help will manifest itself in the future. After his initial 'I'm Backing the Tenants' pledge, his 'backing' as yet, has failed to materialise. How long will we have to wait before Kelly strikes? Can we also expect the full moral, financial and editorial support of the 'Limerick Leader' and its directors in his campaign? It could well be that the active participation of members of the wealthy Buckley family in the cause of the tenants would be a new and novel way of filling in time between their jaded bridge and brandy sessions. It is possible that these directors could be galvanised into action by a remorse of conscience caused by the profits they have made from 'Leader' workers over the years.

It is also possible, of course, that 'Spartacus' is showing signs of becoming one of the greatest 'ball-hoppers' since the legendary John Joe Bowles. His 'backing' for the tenants is not even skin-deep; it is nothing more than a paper space-filling exercise in humbug. It is impossible for Kelly and the 'Limerick Leader' to condemn or even to

point out the class nature of Corporation housing to their readers because they play a conscious part in upholding the present system. The State provides workers with houses and loans for houses—at a price—of a kind and number sufficient to keep the system going. Second-class houses for second-class people. But, then, isn't that what capitalism is all about?

LIMERICK SOCIALIST

Dear Reader,

Thank you for buying our paper and supporting the socialist cause. The purpose of the paper is to provide a socialist commentary and analysis at monthly intervals, on all important developments in Limerick and Irish politics.

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33 Greenhill Road
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Limerick

THE LIMERICK SOVIET

JIM KEMMY

part three

(WHAT THE PAPERS SAID)

AS THE STRIKE continued it received wide day-to-day coverage in the national and international press. The 'Irish Times' and the 'Irish Independent', in particular, paid close and critical attention to the struggle. On Tuesday, April 15, 1919, the 'Independent' headlined its report, 'Limerick's answer to the Martial Law'. Included in the sub-heading were: 'Suspension of all Work' and 'Whole City Held Up'. The dispatch continued: 'Limerick City is on Strike. Shops, warehouses and factories are closed. No work is being done and no business transacted. This is the popular answer to the proclamation of the city as a military area. The employees of Cleeve's factory did not put in an appearance yesterday morning. They subsequently joined in the labour parade through the city. Bakers and butchers' assistants have joined the strike and the effects on the food supplies may be serious. There is a serious possibility that railwaymen will be called out, and a general sympathetic strike may result.' The 'Independent' also published another report headed '14,000 Workers Idle ... All Business Help Up (as Passed by Censor)'. It stated that 'Mr. Cronin, president of the Limerick Trades Council, has wired Mr. W. O'Brien, secretary of the Irish Labour Party and Trade Union Congress: 'General strike here as protest against permit restrictions'. The strikers include 3,000 members of the Irish Transport and General Workers' Union ... The Chairman of the Strike Committee interviewed, said the present industrial situation had arisen out of the tragedy that occurred Sunday week at the workhouse, which he pointed out, was outside the city altogether. 'The Military Authorities have' he said 'seen fit to place Limerick under martial law. In doing that they have fixed their boundaries inside the city, which makes it necessary for the workers to pass in and out to their work. We as organized workers refuse to ask them for permits to earn our daily bread, and this strike is a protest against their action. What we want is to have this bar removed so that workers may have free access to their work in and out of their native city. It is our intention to carry on the strike until this bar is removed. This strike is likely to become more serious.' The report concluded: '... The following official communique has been issued from the Press Censors Office for publication: 'The public of Limerick are informed that although Limerick has been proclaimed a military area this in no way prevents the inhabitants from getting their supplies in the ordinary way.

'If owing to the wanton action of ill-disposed persons, the inhabitants suffer through lack of the necessities of life, the Government are in no way responsible and cannot do anything to ameliorate the consequences of such wanton action.'

On the same day (April 15) an 'Irish Times' news story stated: 'The unanimous

decision to strike was made last evening at a mass meeting of labour, the dominating factor being the Transport Workers' Union. Associated to some degree with labour in its action is the irresponsible element among Sinn Fein which, of course, regards the situation as a challenge to British Law.' On April 16 another 'Times' report claimed that '... the opinion is becoming general that the strike difficulty could be overcome by a slight alteration in the mapping of the boundaries. This appears to be the view of prominent businessmen, whose interests are seriously affected by the existing deadlock and who are actually discussing the situation. They have taken steps to present their views to the proper authorities in the hope that a settlement will soon be reached. The 'Times' continued on April 17: 'It is daily becoming clearer that the sole hope of the strikers here lies in their case being taken up by the Irish Labour Party and being made a national issue. This is borne out by a telegram received by the Strike Committee today from Mr. W. O'Brien, secretary of the party which says: 'Delay action of railwaymen, Limerick, until matter is considered by national executive and national action taken' ... The situation continues to be carefully considered by the Employers' Federation, which is meeting daily, and is in negotiation with the authorities in Dublin in an effort to adjust matters ...'

Tom Johnson, treasurer of the executive of the Irish Labour Party, had been in Limerick since April 17, stated ('Irish Times', April 19) 'that he had authority for announcing that the full strength of the Labour movement in Ireland, backed by the general public, would be exerted on behalf of the men and women of Limerick'.

He continued: 'This is, in the first instance, Labour's fight against the attempt by the British military authorities to choose who shall, or who shall not, proceed to or from his or her daily work, but it is Limerick's reply to President Wilson's question, 'Shall the military source of any nation, or group of nations be suffered to determine the fortunes of people over whom they have no right to rule, except the right of force?' Limerick's reply is 'No', and all Ireland is at her back.' John Cronin stated, in the same issue, 'that the delegates who had been visiting various centres had returned to Limerick, and their reports showed that the workers, especially the railwaymen in other districts were ready to go out when the call was made ...'

The paper also carried a statement from the National Executive of the Irish Labour Party, issued on April 18 declaring that '... The National Executive is unanimous in condemning the action of the military authorities in proclaiming a military area in Limerick, in preventing the free movement of Limerick trade unionists to and from their work, and in depriving them of their rights as workers and citizens, and calls for the immediate abrogation of the order making permits to work obligatory in Limerick. In view of this wanton attack upon trade unionism the National Executive appeals to the unbiased opinion of the workers and peoples of all countries as to on whose shoulders responsibility lies for the probable grave consequences which this unwarrantable and unnecessary action on the part of the military may precipitate.

(to be continued)

old story

'THE HUNDREDS and hundreds of old people who live in miserable conditions are a terrible indictment of our society', said Professor Ivor Browne, Professor of Psychiatry at UCD. ('Irish Times', June 1) In calling for 'the redesigning of housing estates, streets and cities—our whole society—to meet the needs of the human life cycle,' Professor Browne said that 'if we had a moral society with a place in it for everyone irrespective of age, just being old would not be a problem. . . . We are providing houses for young couples, ripping up the life cycle and leaving the old behind ... In our competitive society we are competing all the time, working our way up. At 35 or 40 you reach as good a job as you can and hold on like grim death, kick everybody off the ladder who comes near you. Then when you are 65 the ladder is suddenly swept away, you are given a clock and told to go home ... A woman whose whole effort had gone into rearing children found suddenly that all had married and she was left asking what purpose there was for her in life.

Professor Browne went on to criticise the planning of houses and towns and stated: 'You could not expect a husband and wife with young children to have an

86-year-old mother upstairs when they only have two bedrooms, but if they had a little flat at the back of the house, next door or even down the street, the whole thing would be quite different.'

The professor has been a leading critic of many aspects of society over the last few years. He has shown himself to be 'switched-on' in examining and describing the many social problems being brought about by the development of modern capitalism. Few will doubt the accuracy of his comments on the living conditions of old people. But to view society's treatment of the old in isolation is a mistake. In the competitive system described by Professor Browne, the old are no longer able to hold their places in the economic rat-race. Because of this, their economic and living conditions are down-graded to a bare subsistence level. But to expect otherwise from capitalism would be to demand that it go against its own nature. Capitalism is totally based on the principle of the maximum profits being made by a minority of ruthless people at the expense of the weak, the old and the working class generally.

Professor Browne is good at pointing out the flaws in the present system, but he is rather short in stating a solution. There is, of course, no solution to be found in capitalist society. The treatment of the old and all the exploitation of man by man can only be ended with the socialist answer.

EPITAPH FOR A GOMBEEN MAN

'THIS CONFLICT IS PERSISTENT in modern Ireland. It is most clearly typified in the class which we call the New Middle Classes or the New Bourgeoisie. Mathematically-speaking this term 'Middle Classes' is impossible, because we have no Upper Classes—apart from the remnants of the old Anglo-Irish aristocracy who, unfortunately, are too few, too disgusted, too dispirited, or too indifferent to take part, as a body, in political life. We call the peasants-in-the-towns the Middle Classes only because they have taken over the deplorable mentality and outlook of that type as we know it in Britain and the Continent. This, however painful, is understandable—for all the good understanding does to the country which has to endure a new, rude and crude citizenry in from the heather: simple folk who have shot up like Jack on the Beanstalk from the humblest circumstances; mostly by the same lucky chances that favour men of enterprise, ability or mere cunning at the turn of the tide of any revolution. They have mostly profited by the Irish Government's eagerness to develop native industries, frequently even getting virtual monopolies of the home market behind a tariff-wall. Nobody begrudged them their luck or their sudden-found wealth and many of them have worked hard to exploit their fortunate chances, though not all, for

connolly

'ONCE AND FOR ALL it must be understood that he who strikes at labour in Ireland will get blow for blow in return. It may be necessary to wait patiently for years, but when the opportunity comes the blow should be swift and decisive and merciless! (Workers' Republic, June 1915).

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not all have given good value to the public and many are mere middle-men who contribute nothing to the country but a distributing service at a high cost. What is hard to endure is the combination, in this class, of vulgarity and insincerity. Even the vulgarity one could forgive. How could we expect a stock so long suppressed to blossom suddenly into a class of cultured men? The insincerity of the brute is unforgivable. For in the feverish pursuit of wealth this class seems to have thrown aside all their old, fine rural traditions and every standard but success. They indulge shamelessly in lobbying, political wire-pulling, do not stop at open corruption, bow-tow to clerical influence, make a constant parade of patriotism and piety, never utter, rarely support, and (with some honourable exceptions) do nothing to create an independent public opinion. Their influence on political and social life is pervasive; they have no organised opposition except Labour, which, in a country predominantly

agricultural, is not strong, and is itself in any case not yet trained to think. I do not want to paint a villainous picture. On the contrary these individuals are the most pleasant and scrutable rascals in the world. They are kind and charitable, and what is known as 'good sports', so that no stranger or native who does not use his political uncommon sense would think them other than a splendid addition to the community, instead of, as they are, a splendid subtraction from the community—in the shape of fat profits at public expense. The most engaging, and infuriating thing about these individuals is that they are tremendously patriotic. What they are doing for Ireland is their constant theme-song; no mention being, of course, made of the percentage charged. After all, are they not the sons of the men who fought for 'seven hundred years' for Liberty? The fact is as undeniable as the profits'. (Sean O Faolain, 'The Irish', 1949 edition).

COUNCIL COMMENTARY

THE 'LATE LATE SHOW' was broadcast from Limerick last night as part of a nationwide tour by Mr. Pay Byrne to promote the serious side of Local Government.

'We couldn't afford to let Frank Hall have all the laughs from the Council fruit and nut cakes,' Mr. Byrne is on record as saying, 'so we decided to see if the Councillors are real.'

Televised from the Skintworth Hotel, the show attracted over 200 prominent and distinguished citizens who fought spiritedly each other to gain entry. Six City Councillors formed the 'intellectual' panel, and opening the show, Mr. Byrne asked if Limerick was a conservative city?

'How dare you' fumed Ald. Grieve Coughlan, T.D., 'we don't need pseudo-liberals from Bellyfish Eireann insulting us. Limerick was and always will be a totally Catholic city. Don't take any notice of extremists with their alien ideas. We acted at all times in the best interests of the decent, law abiding people and we kept the faith.'

Mr. Byrne looked shocked and Ald. Pat Kennedy warned: 'Watch him, he's the man who threatened to bomb Donnybrook.'

'With all this talk of bombs one would think we were at a Provo meeting', said Councillor Clem Lazey.

From the back of the hall there was a roar of laughter and the Pity Manager was seen waving hysterically into a monitor. 'Blow the whole bloody no-good lot up', he laughed good-naturedly. It was later learned that he had been seen having some refreshments in the 'hospitality' room before the show started.

Two bouncers dressed in frilly shirts grabbed the Manager and forcibly ejected him while the camera wandered and caught Councillor Mick Pearls desperately chatting-up a voluptuous continuity girl.

By this time Mr. Byrne was desperately trying to control the Councillors who were guzzling whiskey and smoking cigars and acting like toddlers in an ice cream factory.

'The cheek of it', Ald. Coughlan kept

repeating 'calling us conservatives and we got the Confraternity and go to Mass every Sunday. And haven't we two tame Jews and a few hundred tame Protestants? Nobody has ever heard them complaining.'

'Oh my heart is scalded' moaned Councillor Gory Liddy 'I'd walk out in protest only I need the fee.'

'For too long Limerick has been ignored and now when we get the attention they try to make monkeys out of us,' snarled Councillor Jack Lurke, carefully getting his face profile into camera range.

Mr. Byrne was tearing his hair out when Councillor Pearls staggered up to the camera and started singing 'If I Were A Rich Man' into the microphone. For an enchoire Councillor Pearls confirmed his reputation of being Limerick's leading boy soprano by giving a Tiny Tim-like rendering of 'Teddy O'Neill' and 'At The Balalaika'.

'Have you n'are an ould job for a compere' he later asked, 'I have great experience deputising for the Mayor'.

By the time the show ended Mr. Byrne was crawling around the floor on all fours screaming something about persecution and the curse of St. Munchin.

Afterwards the Effin Branch of the ICA issued a protest saying that the actions of the City Council could have a serious effect on the morals of young people and warned against what they called 'Council pornography'. On hearing this Councillor I. B. T. Glasgow stated in the vernacular 'The cheek of that Effin place'.

Irish Actors Equity expressed concern that the Councillors had no Equity cards, as they said Councillor Kennedy was the greatest thing since Jack Benny. The statement ended: 'Of course we acknowledge that they had good training. They have been acting as Councillors for years and coddling the people of Limerick! Late flash: Councillor Jack Lurke has been appointed booking agent to negotiate more money and better drinking conditions for the Council's next television performance.'